

**RALPH N. KLEPS AWARDS
2002 NOMINATION SUMMARIES**

Category 1 (2-6 AJP)

Court: Superior Court of Amador County

Project: Amador Superior Court Becomes Its Own Employer

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Amador Superior Court became its own employer as of July 1, 2001. The Court successfully absorbed all fiscal and administrative functions from the County of Amador in a rigorous one-year project. The Court established a strategic plan goal, created a plan, researched, and implemented all phases of the project in one year. The Court absorbed accounting, payroll, human resources, and procurement functions. This involved becoming an employer in the eyes of the Federal and state government, opening a bank account, researching fiscal systems, implementing systems, and finalizing the project. The Court did the entire project without additional funding resources. Through this project, the Court has made processes more innovative, created new policies and procedures (both fiscal and personnel), created new classification plans, completed labor negotiations, and now stands truly as its own employer.

Court: Superior Court of San Benito County

Project: Court to Community: Teen Parenting

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This project is an outreach effort designed to inform teenagers about the legal and financial consequences for mother and father when a child is born and the parents are (a) not living together and (b) not financially independent and/or (c) not yet 18. The objective is to reduce unplanned pregnancies and births where the children of teens become dependent on public assistance (or family members) and, as a consequence, participants in the Court's family support caseload for establishment and enforcement of support orders. The project is an inter-active presentation where court staff (judges,

commissioners, attorneys) and/or family law attorneys take on roles of court commissioner and family law facilitator in a skit performed with members of the student audience. The skit is based on a short play scenario written by the commissioner and includes a mock interview between the teen father character and the facilitator, and a mock courtroom hearing on the case. Feedback evaluations, from about 500 students over the last three years, indicate a high level of effectiveness, as well as sincere appreciation for the Court's effort, especially among male students.

Category 2 (7-19 AJP)

Court: Superior Court of El Dorado County

Project: STOP NOW Juvenile Justice Court

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The S.T.O.P. N.O.W. project is a collaborative effort of the El Dorado County Superior Court, Public Health Department, Probation Department, and Tahoe Youth and Family Services.

Modeled along the lines of traditional drug courts, it is designed for young people, twelve to seventeen, who have engaged in illegal activities because of substance abuse.

Through intensive wraparound services an attempt is made to empower the youth and the family, reinforce positive choices, and hold the juvenile accountable.

The focus of the activity is bi-weekly court appearances where the minor and his family all sit in. The court monitors the juvenile's performance including drug test results, school attendance, and grades, counseling appointments and any new law enforcement contacts.

The focus of the S.T.O.P.N.O.W. program is upon the family as a unit with emphasis on educational, social, emotional, vocational, medical, and legal needs.

Court: Superior Court of Napa County

Project: Law Day Celebration

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The Napa Superior Court has hosted Law Day events for the community since 1999. The first large scale community event was held in 2001. The success of the 2001 event led the Court to host a similar event for 2002 in celebration of the theme “Assuring Equal Justice for All”. All Napa County students in grades K-12 were invited to participate in a poster or essay contest related to the theme. Community agencies were invited to host an information and activity booth on Law Day. The public received information about court and community services, had their pictures taken in a judges robe, listened to a student drummer group, viewed the contest entries, took a courthouse tour, and attended the student awards ceremony.

Court: Superior Court of Napa County

Project: Spanish Domestic Violence Video

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The Napa Superior Court has completed for release a Spanish-language domestic violence awareness video entitled, “La Red de Los Recursos.” The target audience is Spanish-speaking victims of domestic violence and their families. The video includes domestic violence information appropriate for use in public education of the larger Latino community. It is expected that the community collaboration, funding and distribution methods, and production style of the video will serve as a model for other jurisdictions with significant non-English speaking populations within their communities. Preliminary consumer comments have been very positive.

Court: Superior Court of Nevada/Sierra County

Project: Latinos in the Sierra Symposium Public Law

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In response to the needs of the community, the Superior Court and the Office of the Family Law Facilitator for the Counties of Nevada and Sierra hosted a one-day symposium on January 18, 2002, entitled “Latinos in the Sierra. A legal, cultural, and bi-national Symposium”.

The focus of the symposium was to bring together judges, attorneys, court staff, public agencies, and non-profit groups to better understand what all of us do and explore how working together we can improve the services we provide the Latino/Spanish speaking community in the Sierra Nevada mountains. The goal of this symposium was to improve access to the Courts and other public/non-profit agencies for the self-represented Latino/bi-national primarily Spanish speaking segment of our community.

Court: Superior Court of Nevada County

Project: Public Law Center

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As a creative public outreach project to assist the growing number of self represented individuals involved in our court system, the Nevada County Superior Court established a **Public Law Center** to improve access to justice for all members of the community. This legal “self help” center provides information to individuals who are not represented by an attorney and who may have to navigate through court procedures on a number of legal issues such as Adoption, Conservator ship, Guardianship, Name Change, Unlawful Detainer, Traffic, Appeals, civil harassment, neighbor disputes, jury service and other infractions. The Center provides “self help” information to the public in the form of books, brochures, on-line research, on-line links to other courts, computer forms, videos, forms packets with instructions, and lists of alternate community resources. An attorney and a legal assistant staff the center. While they do not give “legal advice” they do

provide all types of legal information. The center is located on the first floor of the Nevada County Courthouse, in Nevada City, adjacent to the Law Library.

Court: Superior Court of Placer County

Project: Court Handbook

Contact: Mr. Don Schell, Special Projects Officer

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Placer County Superior Court has developed an extremely useful and user-friendly Court Access Information Handbook. The handbook gives the average citizen knowledge to access the different aspects of court business such as civil probate, divorce, traffic fines. Juvenile matters, etc. and in a format that demystifies the widely held perception of complexity the first time user of the Court frequently has. The handout is free and comes in a handy booklet size of 5.5 by 8.5 inches. It is available at any Placer County Court location as well as various other locations such as local libraries, senior centers, etc.

Court: Superior Court of Placer County

Project: Technology Project

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In an effort to pursue the Judicial Council Strategic Plan and provide greater support to its users, Placer Courts separated from an agency maintained network and developed its own cutting edge technology center. In doing so, Placer Courts were able to reduce expenditure while at the same time provide a more stable, secure, and technologically advanced network. This innovation enabled them to push their Case Management System into an arena never thought possible. This opened the door for the CMS vendor to contribute a solution to the California Courts Service Bureau CMS problem.

Court: Superior Court of Shasta County

Project: Seek Work Calendar

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A highly successful calendar is now held weekly in the Shasta County Superior Court. The “Seek Work” calendar was established in September, 2000, within the Family Support Court to specifically address unemployment issues for parents ordered to pay child support. The program has proven to be highly successful in assisting the parents with training and other needs that lead to employment. Often times the end results can be life changing. It is a rewarding opportunity for parents, the child support agency, the court, and most importantly, it can assure the financial well being of the involved children.

Court: Superior Court of Yolo County

Project: Guardianship Outreach

Contact: Ms. Lisa Halko, General Counsel

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The Unified Family Court of the Yolo Superior Court, nationally recognized for its collaborative and innovative services to families, provides a trained family law attorney on site to assist grandparents and other caretakers who are representing themselves in guardianship proceedings. Judge Donna M. Petre, Co-Presiding Judge of the Family Court, and the attorney staff, reach out to the caregivers in the community, educating government agencies, child protection groups, grandparents’ advocates, and other people who are dedicated to protecting children whose parents have neglected or abandoned them. As a result of this education, and the court’s innovative on-site service, guardianship petitions have increased by more than 100% since the program began in 1999. As a result, children’s relationships with their caregivers are regularized, parental abuse and neglect is prevented, and the trauma and expense of dependency proceedings becomes unnecessary for the children and their guardians. The Yolo Court’s program makes guardianship proceedings accessible to people who need them, increases the court’s efficiency, and improves services to children and their families.

Court: Superior Court of Yolo County

Project: Juvenile Violence Court

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Yolo's Juvenile Violence Court (JVC) is a therapeutic model in preventative approaches to addressing juvenile violence. It is a collaborative effort between the Yolo Superior Court and the Yolo County Probation Department that has resulted in an effective and cost efficient response to reducing juvenile violence. Fifteen at-risk juveniles with violent histories are chosen each session. Were it not for the program, these juveniles would be placed out of home. This highly structured program with intensive supervision stresses accountability. Each minor's school attendance is monitored daily, as well as other delinquent behavior at home, and/or drug usage (random drug testing) or gang affiliations (rooms are periodically searched for gang paraphernalia). All minors are required to attend two hours of anger control classes for 12 weeks, as well as peer meetings where a facilitator discusses topics ranging from lessons on the roots of violence and racism, conflict resolution, and self-esteem building.

The Juvenile Violence Court is a holistic approach involving juvenile offenders and their families. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend parenting groups. Juveniles appear monthly in court where the specially assigned probation officer reports on each minor's progress or missteps. As part of the program each minor is also required to attend field trips to the California Youth Authority Diversion/Reality Check and to San Quentin's Squire Program for Minors At Risk. (See exhibit 1 for a more detailed description of the JVC court.) Throughout the program minors keep personal journals. (See exhibit 2 for examples of the rap session assignments and minors' journal notes.) The Juvenile Violence Court reviews are held once a month on Tuesday afternoons.

Category 3 (20-49 AJP)

Court: Superior Court of Contra Costa County

Project: Family Court Services Liaison Committee

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The Contra Costa County Superior court co-sponsors a monthly dialogue among judges, court professionals, the local bar association, and county mental health department to explore the latest legal information and clinical research available regarding child custody cases. Held in the City Hall Chambers of Martinez, these hour and a half programs are presented by a rotating panel that consists of a local family law attorney, mental health professional, and bench officer. Attendees receive certified continuing professional education credits from both the State Bar and State Mental Health licensing agencies. These monthly brown bag gatherings have greatly improved court and related professionals' ability to address the complex issues raised by families in Contra Costa County by exposing participants to emerging information and ideas, and by fostering a multidisciplinary approach to identifying and responding to child custody problems.

Court: Superior Court of Contra Costa County

Project: Residential Treatment Programs for At-Risk Girls

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Under the leadership of Supervising Judge Lois Haight, the longstanding dearth of services available to girls adjudicated as 602 Welfare and Institutions Code wards came to an end in 1999. In 1997 Judge Haight began contacting county agency staff and leadership from mental health, probation, and education to explore the creation of a county operated resource for girls aged 13-17 who could benefit from local services. Although these services had long been available to boys, there was nothing similar for the growing number of teen-aged girls appearing before the juvenile court bench.

To make residential treatment for at-risk girls a reality, the court formed a collaborative team among the Probation and Mental Health departments, the County Office of Education, and the Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF). In addition to offering youth residents individual, group, family, and substance abuse counseling, the Chris Adams Girls Center, through its partnership with ARF, provides residents the chance to improve their self-image and ability to re-enter the community by helping to care for abandoned kittens and puppies as part of an animal assisted therapy program.

Court: Superior Court of Fresno County

Project: Employee Orientation and Training Program

Contact: Ms. Sylvia Sorondo, Probate Manager

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The Fresno Superior Court's Employee Orientation and Training Program was implemented in August 2000 and has proven to be essential in the integration and retention of new employees in our large organization. With communication being critical to the success and retention of both new and established employees, this dynamic orientation and training program provides employees with the information, tools, and skills necessary to effectively accomplish the mission, goals, and objectives of the Court, while at the same time fostering personal growth. The 10-week program clearly conveys to the new employee information on the Court's policies, procedures, employees and employer responsibilities, as well as job expectations. All of these elements are key if employees are to properly assume their role as informed, effective, and responsible members of our organization. While our primary goal was to develop a training program that was responsive to the needs of the employee, we had a secondary goal as well: to reduce the noticeable turnover rate we were experiencing. In both areas, we have been successful. Since implementing this comprehensive training program, our employees have demonstrated that they are better informed and our turnover rate has decreased nearly fifty percent.

Court: Superior Court of Fresno County

Project: Self Help Guardianship Clinic

Contact: Ms. Gina Klee, Probate Manager

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Many unrepresented litigants who appear at the Probate Department in Fresno County have limited access to legal resources. To meet the needs of unrepresented litigants who are seeking guardianship of minor children, the Fresno County Superior Court initiated its Self-help Guardianship Services Program in May of 2001. Potential guardians attend a clinic where Judicial Council forms are explained, filing and service of documents are discussed, and courtroom etiquette is introduced. Those who require additional assistance with forms may continue on to the next stage of the program by utilizing the services of Guardianship Facilitators. Probate Examiners act as facilitators to complete Guardianship Petitions, print the forms, and provide written instruction on how to copy the documents and file them with the Court. Our goal in developing the clinic was to assist guardianship applicants seeking to obtain guardianship who could not afford counsel. We have been successful in meeting our established goal. Since the implementation of this clinic, the number of cases that had to be continued to correct errors or omissions has been significantly reduced and the public has responded favorably to the services offered.

Court: Superior Court of Monterey County

Project: “Justice” Mural

Contact: Ms. Sherri Pedersen, Executive Officer

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The Monterey County Superior Court partnered with the One Voice Arts and Leadership Program of the Monterey County Office for Employment Training, the Department of Justice, and the Monterey County Board of Supervisors to create a justice-themed mural for display in the Jury Assembly Room at the Salinas Courthouse. The One Voice Arts and Leadership Program is a federally funded youth employment training program. The goal of this program is to join local artists with economically disadvantaged at-risk youth, to develop their artistic skills and teach them valuable job-related skills; including

teamwork, group dynamics, leadership, creative thinking, and problem solving. The youth muralists were required to write an essay on their concept of justice after participating in the program. The completed “Justice” mural stands 8 feet high by 28 feet wide and depicts historic images of justice in Monterey County, including Ohlone Indian culture, a Spanish galleon, Colton Hall where the California Constitution was signed, the 1930 Monterey County courthouse, the symbolic blindfolded Lady of Justice, and other native trees and animals. The mural was unveiled during Juror Appreciation Week and now inspires all who visit the jury assembly room. Judge Wendy Duffy stated, “This wonderful mural represents the history, diversity, and beauty of Monterey County. We appreciate the important role jurors have in serving the County and we hope seeing the mural will enhance their experience as jurors.”

Court: Superior Court of Monterey County

Project: Kid’s Day

Contact: Ms. Sherri Pedersen, Executive Officer

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To promote community and court involvement in the education process, the Superior Court of California, County of Monterey offers an annual court-customized “Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day” our court calls Kid’s Day. Court staff’s daughters, sons, relatives, friends, or any child in need of mentoring, between the ages of 9 and 15, is invited. The days focus is about educating young people and building awareness of the court’s role in the community, their civic responsibility, and of the career possibilities at a critical time in a child’s growth.

The young people attending Kid’s Day, tour the Superior Court, Jury Services, Bailiff station, Probation Department, District Attorney’s Office, and the Public Defender’s Office. Beyond court functions, attendees learn about the jury system, court interpreting, court information technology, and observe courtroom proceedings. Along with a Certificate of Participation, those attending receive a name tag with a “sporty” neon lanyard, embroidered baseball cap, court logo pencil, McGruff comic and coloring books, badges, and other souvenirs of their day at the court.

Court: Superior Court of San Joaquin County

Project: In The Interest of Justice Video

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In the Interest of Justice: is a cultural awareness video with accompanying written materials produced by the Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin. The video seeks to educate both the bench and court staff in all California Courts about the Southeast Asian cultures of the Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese. This project illustrates how cultural differences can clash in the courtroom where Southeast Asian formalities, such as diverting eyes from authority as a way of showing respect, can be misunderstood by American judges and judicial staff. Southeast Asians' aversion to the court is of particular concern in the pursuit of justice.

Court: Superior Court of Santa Barbara County

Project: Legal Education Program

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The Santa Barbara Superior Court orchestrated a comprehensive community collaborative in honor of National Law Week in May 2002. With broad participation from the educational and legal communities, Northern Santa Barbara County was exposed to unprecedented access to the court and justice related agencies. A poster and essay contest was introduced in over 13 schools of the Santa Maria Bonita School District. Winners received special recognition from Judge Rogelio Flores and the Santa Maria Police Department Chief John Sterling as they were chauffeured to lunch in the Police Departments' DARE vehicle and presented with special law week medals. A weeklong celebration culminated in a Law Fair at the local mall with over 30 law and justice related agencies represented and available for question and answers. The Law Week Planning committee comprised of the Santa Maria City Attorney, Santa Maria Bonita School District, Santa Maria Police Department, Northern Santa Barbara County Bar Association, Santa Maria Legal Secretaries Association and the Santa Barbara Superior Court planned for over a year for this successful endeavor to increase awareness of services available in the Courts and the legal community. That goal was achieved and

has begun a tradition of legal community collaboration, which ultimately provides greater access to justice for those served by the courts.

Court: Superior Court of Sonoma County

Project: CLETS Interface

Contact: Ms. Donna Gomes, Director, Court Technical Service Division

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The Sonoma County Superior Court developed a computer software program to allow automatic electronic transmission of restraining order information from the Sonoma County Superior Court Case Management System to the Department of Justice California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System automated computer system (CLETS).

Information entered into the state CLETS system is accessible to all law enforcement agencies in the state of California. The information contained is related to terms and conditions of domestic violence restraining orders, harassment restraining orders, elder abuse, workplace violence, and criminal protective orders.

Court: Superior Court of Sonoma County

Project: Student Shadowing Program

Contact: Ms. Denise Gordon, Executive Officer

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The Student Shadowing Program is a 12-week program designed to educate high school students about the court and justice system. Students are accompanied by a court employee group facilitator and visit a different court type each week, receive background information on the case, meet with the judge following the courtroom visit to ask questions about the case or of the judge. They also tour holding facilities and witness jury selection process and wrap up the 12-week session with a mock trial. About 5 to 11 students participate each semester and are asked to keep a weekly log of their impressions and write a review or short paper for presentation during their “graduation” luncheon where they gather with the judicial officers that they’ve met throughout the process. Students have found this to be a tremendous educational experience and one they will

remember long into their adult lives. Student essays and reflections are included in the program binder that will arrive under separate cover.

Court: Superior Court of Ventura County

Project: Annual Report

Contact: Mr. Robert Sherman, Deputy Executive Officer

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The Ventura Superior Court has created an Annual Report/Community Guide for wide circulation throughout the community to provide basic information about the services offered by the court. It is an eight-page newsletter-style publication designed to be interesting, informative, and easy to read. It gives highlights of court activity during the past year, information on the many unique programs and services available, and little-known facts about the court.

The report represents a direct effort by the court to both inform and educate the public. Over 115,000 copies have been received by households throughout the county as an insert in the newspaper; mailed to elected officials, community leaders, and civic groups; supplied to public libraries; and placed in all public lobbies at each courthouse.

While containing the goals and accomplishments of an annual report, the primary focus is on providing a useful community guide to court programs and services. Special information is also included on traffic citations and jury service, two areas where the public is most likely to have contact with the court.

Court: Superior Court of Ventura County

Project: Go To Court For A Career

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The Ventura Superior Court has implemented the Go to Court for a Career program that utilizes the daily pool of prospective jurors to expand the reach of the Court Human Resources recruiting program.

Recognizing the jury pool as an untapped source of potential employees, the Court created the Go to Court for a Career Program to provide information to the public about career opportunities with the Court.

There are few if any direct costs and the amount of time and materials spent administering the program is minimal. Each day as a part of juror orientation, a representative from the Court Human Resources department gives a brief presentation about job opportunities and the benefits of working for the Ventura Superior Court. Jurors are provided with a listing of available job openings and instructions on how to apply for a position with the court. The program reaches approximately 50,000 potential applicants through these efforts each year, and the feedback received from applicants and the public has been uniformly positive.

Category 4 (50+ AJP)

Court: Superior Court of Alameda County

Project: The Courtwide Customer Service Committee

Contact: Ms. Vicki L. Ward, Trial Court Administrator

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The Courtwide Customer Service Committee utilizes the creativity and energy of court staff to develop innovative projects that address issues of employee recognition, customer feedback, and efficient use of technology and access to information. Activities include workshops, a court facility resource manual, on-line directory, customer service week, spotlight award to recognize outstanding employees, a quarterly Full Court Press newsletter, and a Courtwide Customer Service policy to guide the continuing efforts of the court to provide the best and highest quality of service to the public.

Court: Superior Court of Alameda County

Project: San Leandro-Hayward Drug Treatment Court

Contact: Ms. Francine Byers, Substance Abuse Treatment Specialist

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Judge Peggy Fulton Hora presides over the San Leandro-Hayward Drug Treatment Court at the Hayward Hall of Justice in Alameda County. A pre-plea division program established in March 1998, this program is designed for offenders of PC 1000.5 misdemeanor or felony drug-related offenses (excluding violent offenses, DUIs, and other exclusions based on PC 1000.5) who are appearing in the criminal justice system for the first time. The program provides offenders a choice between jail or treatment and if deemed eligible by the District Attorney, offenders must sign a contract to participate in the 18-month program, as well as participate in a treatment program, obtain a GED/H.S. diploma if applicable, pay all fees/fines, and submit to weekly drug testing. When the program is successfully completed, participants will have the criminal charges against them dismissed and “graduate” from the program. This program utilizes community policing and continuing education about drug policies and the progressions in drug treatment methods.

Court: Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Project: Guardianship Volunteer Project

Contact: Mr. John A. Clarke, Executive Officer

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As a creative public outreach project to assist the growing number of self represented individuals involved in our court system, the Nevada County Superior Court established a **Public Law Center** to improve access to justice for all members of the community. This legal “self help” center provides information to individuals who are not represented by an attorney and who may have to navigate through court procedures on a number of legal issues such as Adoption, Conservator ship, Guardianship, Name Change, Unlawful Detainer, Traffic, Appeals, civil harassment, neighbor disputes, jury service and other infractions. The Center provides “self help” information to the public in the form of books, brochures, on-line research, on-line links to other courts, computer forms, videos, forms packets with instructions, and lists of alternate community resources. An attorney

and a legal assistant staff the center. While they do not give “legal advice” they do provide all types of legal information. The center is located on the first floor of the Nevada County Courthouse, in Nevada City, adjacent to the Law Library.

Court: Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Project: Probate Volunteer Panel (PVP)

Contact: Mr. John A. Clarke, Executive Officer

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PVP is a technologically advanced method to provide court-appointed representation for entities that cannot arrange legal representation for themselves. PVP addresses many of the obstacles that these individuals might encounter in preparing for court probate procedures. Supplying attorneys through PVP decreases the likelihood for error in appointing unavailable or under-qualified attorneys to minors and conservatees. Electronic maintenance provides a real-time flow of updates and additions to the system.

Court: Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Project: Traffic Payment System

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Each year, over 1.5 million traffic citations are issued in Los Angeles County. Many customers complained about the inconvenience of waiting for extended periods of time prior to the implementation of The Traffic Payment Center. In addition, uniform traffic procedures and policies became crucial when the numerous Los Angeles County Municipal Courts unified with the Los Angeles Superior Court in January of 2000. The Traffic Payment Center was implemented to provide a satisfactory alternative to the Los Angeles community for resolving traffic issues outside of regular courthouse business hours. Participating courthouses confirm a marked decrease in daily congestion as a result of the project. Court clientele are able to complete a variety of traffic transactions with the convenience of telephone access.

Court: Superior Court of Orange County

Project: Fatherhood 101

Contact: Hon. Richard G.Vogl, Commissioner

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“Fatherhood 101” is a project organized within Orange County through coordination of the Orange County Superior Court Family Law Panel and the community. The project has established donated rental space where series of twelve (12) classes are taught so that young men may learn what it is to be a “father.” Prepare for both English and Spanish speaking participants, the program focuses on how a man can be a hero to his children, the role of both parents in rearing children, the needs of a child and how they change over the years, and juggling a job, school, and parental time. In addition, costs of child rearing, child support, and real life responsibilities are stressed.

Court: Superior Court of Orange County

Project: Self-Help Forms Printing Kiosk Project

Contact: Anthony A. Thompson, Manager, Court Management Services

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The Orange County Superior Court has completed installation of self-service, high-speed forms printing stations at all seven of the court’s justice center locations. The print-on-demand touchscreen capability of each station provides the public with instant access, at no cost, to all of the court’s approximately 575 pre-printed forms for civil, small claims, family law, probate, and criminal matters, eliminating the need to travel to various justice centers to obtain forms. Each time the user selects a form, the stations access the California Judicial Council’s website for each non-local form, and the court’s public web server for local forms. This ensures that the user always sees and prints the latest version of the form. The installation of the forms printing stations is in furtherance of the court’s strategic goals of improving access to the processes of the court, accelerating responsiveness to the needs of the public, and use of technology to provide information and tools necessary for the public to effectively and efficiently use the courts.

Court: Superior Court of Riverside County

Project: Court Certificate Program

Contact: Ms. Inga McElyea, Regional Court Administrator

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To enhance court staff's skills and performance through continuing professional education and development, the Riverside Superior Court created a Court Certificate Program in August 1999. The program provides an opportunity for full-time, permanent employees to develop their professional and personal skills and build self-esteem, all of which enhances the overall quality of their work and maximizes customer service. Eligible employees agree to a minimum two-year commitment to attend internal court training courses (held during work hours) and classes at a community college (on their own personal time.)

The curriculum includes classes in ethics, business, technology, communications, law, and customer service. Staff who have completed this program are given special consideration when applying for promotions and advancement. By enhancing their personal communication skills and knowledge of the system in which they work, the administration of justice is improved and the public reaps the benefits of this investment in our staff.

Court: Superior Court of Riverside County

Project: Bilingual Information

Contact: Ms. Jana Douglass, Court Services Director

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It is believed that many citizens are intimidated by the court system in general, but the Court felt that monolingual Spanish speakers were particularly anxious about navigating the justice system. The Court was concerned that these fears kept many of our Hispanic populace from appearing or utilizing the court's services.

The Bilingual Information/Community Outreach Booth was started at the request of members of the local Hispanic community to increase communication and address specific needs and perceptions to equal/fair access.

Court staff is available each morning and afternoon, during peak hours, to answer simple questions and direct customers thus alleviating some of their trepidation.

Since its inception in July 2001, 7,742 people have been helped during peak hours. Approximately 47 are helped each morning, and 16 are helped each afternoon.

Court: Superior Court of Sacramento County

Project: Virtual Courthouse Tour

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The Virtual Courthouse Tour provides an entertaining way to learn about Sacramento's Superior Court. This Internet accessible program with 360-degree photos of court facilities and services uses hot spots and pop-ups to educate and link people to all facets of court operations. The Virtual Courthouse Tour was designed to keep your interest while linking you to continually updated information, electronic forms and related public safety and human service web sites. The court uses the Virtual Courthouse Tour in the orientation of new employees and judges, while students take a virtual field trip in Civics.

Court: Superior Court of Sacramento County

Project: Juvenile Dependency Drug Court

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The Sacramento County Juvenile Dependency Drug Court (DDC) is designed to help abused and neglected children by addressing parental abuse within the context of Dependency Court child-protection cases. Dependency Drug Court serves parents whose substance abuse played a role in the reason the child was removed from their care. Dependency Drug Court clients must successfully complete an alcohol or other drug counseling program and drug testing as part of their reunification plan to be eligible for drug court. The Dependency Drug Court is a separate Court from Sacramento's Juvenile Dependency Court. Dependency Drug Court proceedings run parallel to and in

concert with the Dependency home court. Sacramento County's Dependency Drug Court is designed to provide closely monitored treatment services, which includes regular attendance in the separate Juvenile Dependency Drug Court.

The drug court has already seen an increase in successful reunification as parents conquer their alcohol and drug use and associated problems. Without recovery in the form of abstinence parents are often unable to complete other aspects of their reunification plan including court ordered parenting, anger control and counseling. Parents are also encouraged to resolve their long-standing issues associated with alcohol and drug use such as financial issues, housing problems and employment issues. Drug court parents often present with a myriad of problems including homelessness, lack of medical insurance, transportation, childcare, and a support system to reinforce and encourage the completion of treatment. The Sacramento County Juvenile Dependency Drug Court is anchored in the following system-wide approach: 1) early identification and intervention with substance abusing parents identified by the Department of Health and Human Services at the time of the initial dependency hearing; 2) intensive recovery management services through the Specialized Treatment and Recovery Services (STARS) program; and 3) voluntary participation in the Dependency Drug Court. Dependency Drug Court offers three levels of participation. Level I includes 3 separate compliance review hearings typically calendared 30, 60, and 90 days post-disposition. Level II serves clients who are struggling and includes more frequent court appearances and increased treatment contacts. Level III is for parents who decide to continue in drug court to graduation. Graduation from drug court requires 6 months of consecutive compliance with testing, 12-step attendance, and treatment.

Court: Superior Court of San Bernardino County

Project: Mental Health Court

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The Superior Court's Mental Health Court was established in 1999 in response to the growing number of those individuals with serious mental illness who are treatment refractory, i.e., they either do not volunteer for treatment or they are not compliant with treatment they do receive. These treatment resistant clients find themselves incarcerated in local jails and state prisons for periods far longer than those who do not suffer from mental illness.

Superior Court's Mental Health Court provides mentally ill felony defendants a single point of contact within the court system. A dedicated team works directly with the

defendant to provide a comprehensive treatment plan that includes housing, transportation, treatment, peer support, and community integration. Mental Health Court closely monitors the defendant's treatment needs and progress through frequent review hearings during the period of court jurisdiction. Upon completion of the program participants experience a formal graduation upon which charges are reduced and often times dismissed. Graduates leave the program engaged in the community through employment, community service, educational programs, and social network including the dual diagnosis 12-step community.

Court: Superior Court of San Bernardino County

Project: Legal Assistant Training

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The Court created a class series structure that requires assessment testing, cross training and job rotation to create a higher skill level; and provide greater flexibility in meeting workload demands and improving customer service.

The Legal Processing Assistant (LPA) series was implemented March 2001. The program was developed in a series of collaborative working groups of all court managers and supervisors within the organization. There were three teams working together to develop promotional cross-training plans, standards, and training classes. The program was designed so that it is truly reflective of the court's needs and workload. It has helped create a staff pool of highly trained employees to better serve the public. There are three levels within the LPA classification series. The first level is a trainee class in which employees learn and perform simple tasks of the work unit. The next level in the series is the entry and first working level. All employees are trained in moderate and complex tasks. Upon fully demonstrating their competency in these work tasks, passing assessment examinations and meeting experience requirements, employees are promoted to the fully experienced journey level. Employees must demonstrate competence in the most difficult tasks of one to two work units and be willing to work where the need is the greatest. All positions are budgeted at the experienced journey level.

The competitive testing design for promotion has been eliminated. In so doing, the cost of recruiting, testing and interviewing has significantly been reduced. The employee who begins as an LPA trainee has six months to complete six classroom-training programs, including "Orientation," "Customer Service," "Ethics," "Beyond Bias," and a class entitled "CORE" that gives basic information relating to the superior court. The employee must also be evaluated as competent in all basic duties to promote to the LPAI

level. As an LPAI, the employee is expected to learn the moderate and complex duties of the assignment and is required to complete classroom training addressing the specific procedures of a technical nature for the area of law in which the employee works. The employee is expected to cross-train and learn all of the desk duties within the particular unit of assignment. Upon completion of eighteen months as an LPAI, the employee is promoted to LPAII.

Court: Superior Court of San Diego County

Project: On My Honor Law Education Program

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ON MY HONOR is a complete educational experience for both elementary and middle school students. It was conceived by Judge Richard G. Cline of the San Diego Superior Court, who collaborated with a local teacher to develop the teacher's guide, and numerous lesson plans and activities. ON MY HONOR also includes a visit to the court and participation in a mock trial. The program teaches our youth about the legal system the courts, and the administration of justice. Over 1,900 students from several school districts have participated in the program since its inception in 2000, and judges from several divisions of the San Diego Superior Court have been trained in its presentation. Accolades about the program have been received from students, and include their expressions of thanks for the opportunity to learn how the reality of the justice system differs from the television portrayals.

Court: Superior Court of San Francisco County

Project: Internet Access

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The San Francisco Superior Court has partnered with a private company called Courtroom Connect to provide high-speed wireless Internet access, printing and other data services to those who use the courthouse – at no cost to the court. This innovative initiative allows litigators, members of the public, and court employees to conduct online research, transfer large office

files, send and receive e-mail with attachments, access trial databases, follow the realtime transcript, and print documents wirelessly from their laptops – all while sitting in the courtroom, cafeteria, or anywhere else in the courthouse. In addition, qualified court reporters are using the wireless network to pioneer the country's first ever live broadcasts of realtime transcripts outside of the courthouse. A lawyer in Los Angeles could follow the realtime transcript of a trial in San Francisco, and e-mail comments to the trial team sitting in the courtroom. The combination of these services allows litigators to bring the full resources of their office with them into the courthouse.

Court: Superior Court of San Francisco County

Project: Parents Guide to CPS and the Courts

Contact: Mr. Jon Schiller, Ph.D., Director, Family Services Unified Courts

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The San Francisco Unified Family Court has published *A Parents Guide to CPS and the Courts: How it Works and How You Can Put Things Back on Track*, a handbook for parents involved in the juvenile dependency system. In addition to explaining the various hearings and terminology of the dependency system, this handbook includes a first person narrative from a parent whose children were dependents of the court. The narrative of her story, her retrospective thoughts on how she could have made better use of the Department's intervention, and her ongoing suggestions to parents on how to navigate through the often frightening and overwhelming experience of the court sets this handbook apart from any other guide published for parents in relation to negotiating the dependency court process. Written with the language and perspective of a parent in the system, the handbook provides an intelligible explanation. The handbook is so uniquely helpful to parents that the Center for Families, Children and the Court is planning to disseminate it throughout the State.

Court: Superior Court of Santa Clara County

Project: Adolescent Individualized Treatment Court

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The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara has assumed a national leadership role in addressing the mental health issues of young violators with the calling of the nation's first Court for the Individualized Treatment of Adolescents (CITA) on February 14, 2001. CITA uses a multi-disciplinary approach that looks to the community for mental health and wraparound services to serve not only the juvenile but also the family.

National studies have estimated that 50% to 70% of young law violators in the juvenile justice system have some diagnosable mental health disorder, which indicates that this system has become the common pathway for many youth with serious mental illness. With early assessment, professionals identify candidates for CITA from juveniles who have committed non-serious offenses and who are suffering from major depression, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, severe anxiety disorders, severe ADHD, developmental disabilities, and organic brain syndromes. Judge Raymond Davilla, Supervising Judge of the Delinquency Court, through a collaborative effort of prosecutors, defense counsel, probation officers, and mental health professionals develops an individualized plan that balances the best interests of the minor, the family, the victim, and the community at large. Since CITA began, 60 juveniles have been accepted in the program with only one failure

Combining accountability with a therapeutic approach, a whole spectrum of community services is used to effect a more humane treatment of juveniles with serious mental illness, help relieve the overcrowding of detention facilities and decrease recidivism. Judge Davilla states, "The CITA gives us many more options in the proper treatment of these youth as well as the protection of our community. This is truly a team effort which will continue to adjust as we better define the need of our juvenile population."

Court: Superior Court of Santa Clara County

Project: Comprehensive Staff Training

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Through a collaborative effort between all administrative and operational divisions, the Court designed and implemented a comprehensive and innovative approach to employee training. The 2001 Strategic Plan for Staff Development and Training was developed and approved by the Court to identify, create, implement, and track the educational needs of employees at every level. Born from the strategic plan, a mechanism has been created which not only focuses on current employee educational needs, but also expands its scope to encompass future needs. That method, the Basic Training Plan, provides in-depth focused training from the first day of employment. This comprehensive approach to Staff Development and Training has opened the door to a new universe of educational opportunities for court employees.

Category 5 (Appellate Courts)

Court: Court of Appeal, First Appellate District

Project: Appellate Mediation Program

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The mediation program resolves litigation early in the appellate process, before parties incur the cost of preparing briefs. By initiating the mediation process, the court affords parties an opportunity for settlement that they may not take on their own. A court trained mediator is assigned to a case based on his or her mediation skills and subject matter expertise. The mediation process is informal and confidential and maximizes parties' participation in settling their dispute. This increases public satisfaction with the judicial system.

Detailed information may be found in the enclosed September 2001 report of the Task Force on Appellate mediation and the attached annual program report for 2001/2002.

Court: Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District

Project: Computer Generated Panel Management Program

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This program uses Visual Basic language to generate panel assignments for civil, criminal, juvenile, Wende and Sadie C. appeals. The deputy clerk enters the case name; appellate number; county of origin; nature of the case; case notes or pending motions and selects the assignment button. The computer then generates the author and two participating justices. Other fields of data that can be entered are: appellant's reply due date; pending calendar date; research attorney assigned to the case; and opinion file date. Also, this program tallies the number of cases assigned to each justice on a monthly basis to insure parity. The user can modify the program by deleting or changing panel assignments, or to update information. Other statistical programs can be run to derive monthly or yearly information.